image on the basis of at least one of the density and the gradation conversion conditions, and thus creates the reproduced image. The method may initially separate the digital image data into density component data and color component data, determine the density and gradation conversion conditions by using the density component data instead of the digital image data, modify the density component data in accordance with the density and gradation conversion conditions and synthesize the modified density component data with the color component data.--

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 11, with the following paragraph:

-- Further, the representative value representing the principal image area implies a value (image data, and a density value, etc.) with which the principal image area is directly or indirectly or statistically estimated based on the characteristic value given above. The reason why the representative value is derived in such a manner is to eliminate an influence upon the converted representative value due to an interaction between the modified image data and the digital image data.--

Replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 15 with the following paragraph:

-- Herein, the processed image data is modified based on the reproducing aim value of the reproducing apparatus, which implies that the reference value of the digital image data can be reproduced properly by the reproducing apparatus. For example, it means that if respective RGB signal values take 255, 255, 255 (in the case of 8 bits) as the reference value, the reproducing